

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 375

August 9, 1995, 1:17 p.m.
Page S-12006 Temp. Record

INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS/National African-American Museum

SUBJECT: Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996 . . . H.R. 1977.
Stevens motion to table the Simon amendment No. 2306.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 50-47

SYNOPSIS: As reported, H.R. 1977, the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996, will provide \$12.053 billion in new budget authority, which is \$69 million more than the House-passed bill provided, \$1.76 billion less than the Administration requested, and 11 percent less than the fiscal year (FY) 1995 level.

The Simon amendment would establish a "National African American Museum" within the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian's Board of Regents would be authorized to design plans for reconstructing and renovating the Arts and Industries Building to house the museum. A Board of Trustees would be established, and a director of the museum would be appointed. The amendment would authorize such sums as may be necessary for the creation of the museum.

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Stevens moved to table the Simon amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

We have no money for this project and no money for the foreseeable future. The Senate should not get into the habit of authorizing projects that it knows full well that it has no capability of funding. The Smithsonian Institution is one of the only functions in this bill lucky enough to escape funding cuts from last year's level. However, that does not mean that it is not on a shoestring budget. Congress has previously approved funding for an Indian Museum Cultural Resources Center, plus it has approved an expansion of the Air and Space Museum. On the former, this bill will appropriate only \$15 million of the requested \$19 million. That project has a chance of being completed someday because a significant amount of private funds are being donated. On the latter, money has been spent on planning, but no funding is available for construction. The main priority for the Smithsonian right now is

(See other side)

YEAS (50)			NAYS (47)			NOT VOTING (3)	
Republicans (43 or 81%)		Democrats (7 or 16%)	Republicans (10 or 19%)	Democrats (37 or 84%)		Republicans (1)	Democrats (2)
Abraham	Hatch	Baucus	Brown	Akaka	Johnston	Mack- ²	Bradley- ⁴
Ashcroft	Hatfield	Byrd	Campbell	Biden	Kennedy		Breaux- ²
Bennett	Helms	Ford	Cohen	Bingaman	Kerry		
Bond	Hutchison	Hollings	Jeffords	Boxer	Kohl		
Burns	Inhofe	Kerrey	Lugar	Bryan	Lautenberg		
Chafee	Kassebaum	Moynihan	McCain	Bumpers	Leahy		
Coats	Kempthorne	Rockefeller	Snowe	Conrad	Levin		
Cochran	Kyl		Specter	Daschle	Lieberman		
Coverdell	Lott		Thompson	Dodd	Mikulski		
Craig	McConnell		Warner	Dorgan	Moseley-Braun		
D'Amato	Murkowski			Exon	Murray		
DeWine	Nickles			Feingold	Nunn		
Dole	Packwood			Feinstein	Pell		
Domenici	Pressler			Glenn	Pryor		
Faircloth	Roth			Graham	Reid		
Frist	Santorum			Harkin	Robb		
Gorton	Shelby			Heflin	Sarbanes		
Gramm	Simpson			Inouye	Simon		
Grams	Smith				Wellstone		
Grassley	Stevens						
Gregg	Thomas						
	Thurmond						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

maintenance. With great difficulty, we managed to win approval for funding to fix Smithsonian roofing in this bill. This funding is only for the most urgent repair that is needed; the rehabilitation and repair backlog is estimated to be \$250 million. Smithsonian Institution officials have informed Congress that its buildings "will all reach their useful service lives within a 5-year time span." A Washington Post article reported on June 10, 1995 that "half a billion dollars' worth of repairs will be needed over the next 10 years to keep the Smithsonian Institution's doors open." Finally, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the cost of an African-American museum would be between \$5 million and \$6 million yearly. Where will the money come from? The Smithsonian clearly cannot stretch its budget for this new museum, and Congress cannot afford to increase the Smithsonian budget. The time may come for creating this museum, but that time is not now. Agreeing to the Simon amendment would be agreeing to build something which we all know will not be built anytime soon. We will not participate in such a charade, and therefore urge that this amendment be tabled.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

There are two distinct groups in America that are unique from all other groups because of the horrendous treatment they have received--Native Americans and African-Americans. We have agreed to build a Native American museum to memorialize the unique contributions by Native Americans to our country and to reflect on the adversities they have overcome and the prejudice they still face today. We should build a museum for African-Americans for the same reasons. Our colleagues have complained that we do not have the money to build this museum, but we note that not one penny is appropriated. This amendment just gives the Smithsonian the option. We have passed similar amendments in the past, and our colleagues should be aware that the Smithsonian itself has requested that we authorize the construction of an African-American museum. We do not believe that this amendment asks for too much; we urge our colleagues to give it their support.